

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONGEN JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

USINT ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 4934

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF

SUBJ: OUTLOOK FOR PALESTINE DEBATE

REF: SECTO 604

SUMMARY: PALESTINE DEBATE WILL BEGIN NOV. 13 WITH SPEECH BY
BY ARAFAT WHICH ONE PLO DELEGATE MAINTAINS CONTAINS NO "BOMB-
SHELLS" -- AND IS SCHEDULED END NOV. 21. ISRAEL HAS INSCRIBED
FOR EACH MORNING, CAUSING SYRIA TO INSCRIBE AS OFTER

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AFTER HER, AND VIRTUALLY ENSURING LONG AND ACRIMINIOUS DEBATE.

WESTERN EUROPEANS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PERSUADE ARABS OF NEED FOR MODERATE RESOLUTION, CONTAINING 242-LIKE LANGUAGE ACKNOWLEDGING ISRAEL'S SOVEREIGNTY AND RIGHT TO LIVE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES. MOST ARABS SEE RESOLUTION EMERGING WHICH AT LEAST IMPLICITLY ABANDONS PLO GOAL OF DESTROYING ISRAEL. ISRAELIS, FOR THEIR PART, CAN CONCEIVE OF NO ADVANTAGES FROM THIS DEBATE AND CONSEQUENTLY LOOK WITH SUSPICION ON EC-NINE EFFORTS TOWARD MODERATION. MAIN ELEMENTS OF PLO DRAFT RESOLUTION ARE REPORTED IN FINAL PARAGRAPH.

1. DURATION OF DEBATE, ORDER OF SPEAKERS, ETC.

UN DEBATE ON PALESTINE IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MORNING NOV 13 IN PLENARY AND EXTEND THROUGH NOV 21. PLO IS INSCRIBED ONLY ONE, AS FIRST SPEAKER; HOWEVER, ARABS HERE THINK IT POSSIBLE PLO DEL MAY INTERVENE THROUGHOUT DEBATE--PARTICULARLY IN RIGHTS OF REPLY. LEBANESE PRESIDENT FRANGIEH WILL ADDRESS ASSEMBLY NOON NOV 14, SPEAKING AS CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL. IN UNEXPECTED AND CONTOVERSIAL MOVE, ISRAEL HAS INSCRIBED HERSELF AS THIRD SPEAKER EVERY MORNING OF DEBATE. ISRAELI DEL TELLS US PURPOSE IS TO ASSURE ITS ABILITY TO REPLY IF NECESSARY WHEN EVERY ONE WILL LISTEN RATHER THAN AT END OF MEETING. ARABS FIRST CONSIDERED CHALLENGING THIS AS PROCEDURALLY IMPROPER AND UNPRECEDENTED. IN THE EVENT, RATHER THAN CHALLENGE, ARABS DECIDED TO INSCRIBE SYRIA (WHICH ACTING AS ARAB SPOKESMAN) AS FIFTH SPEAKER EACH MORNING TO REPLY TO ISREAL. (EXCEPTION TO THIS ORDER IS NOV 13 WHEN SYRIA IS INSCRIBED SECOND AND ISRAEL FOURTH.) THIS SCENARIO WILL ALMOST INEVITABLY LEAD TO DEBATE THAT IS BOTH LONGER AND MORE ACRIMONIOUS THAN WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN CASE.

2. ARAB PREPARATIONS FOR DEBATE.

ARAB DELEGATIONS HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES INTO "ACTION GROUP" TO HANDLE PROBLEMS RELATED TO PALESTINE DEBATE. WHEN FIRST SET UP LAST WEEK, ACTION GROUP CONSISTED OF SEVEN DELEGATIONS: SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN, PLO, LEBANAON, IRAQ AND MOROCCO. GROUP HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN EXPANDED SINCE THEN TO INCLUDE UAE, ALGERIA, LIBYA, TUNISIA AND ARAB LEAGUE OFFICE. FOUR-MAN DRAFTING COMMITTEE HAS ALSO BEEN SET UP, COMPRISING NEW YORK PLO REPRESENTATIVE SAADAT HASAN, JORDANIAN AMB TO ROME NASSABI, UAE ATTACHE BURHAN HAMMAD, AND KUWAITI COUNSELOR FAYEZ SAYEGH. THIS GROUP APPARENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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FIRST BEGAN DRAFTING THIS PAST WEEKEND. EGYPTIAN PERMREP MEGUID TOLD CBS CORRESPONDENT HOTTELET THAT RESULT WAS INFORMAL WORKING PAPER "WITH ABSOLUTELY NO STATUS." EVERYTHING WE HAVE HEARD CONFIRMS THAT NO DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ARE AFLOAT. ARABS WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED RECOGNIZE THAT NO MEANINGFUL DRAFTING CAN BE DONE UNTIL PLO DELEGATION JOINS EXERCISE.

3. WESTERN EUROPEANS' VIEWS AND ACTIVITY

EC-NINE MISSIONS TELL US NINE HAVE DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO WORK FOR MOST MODERATE POSSIBLE RESOLUTION. BRITISH HERE SAY FCO HAS INSTRUCTED EMBASSIES IN IMPORTANT ARAB CAPITALS TO UNDERLINE SIGNIFICANCE UK ATTACHES TO BALANCED RESOLUTION. IN NEW YORK BRITISH HAVE BEEN ARGUING TO ARABS THAT ANY RESOLUTION SHOULD EXPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AS A SOVEREIGN STATE. (CANADIANS HAVE TAKEN SAME LINE.) FRENCH TELL US THAT EC-NINE MIDDLE EAST DIRECTORS DECIDED RECENTLY THAT RESOLUTION EMERGING FROM DEBATE SHOULD CONTAIN LANGUAGE IDENTICAL OR AT LEAST SIMILAR TO THAT OF SC RES 242 "ON RIGHT OF EVERY STATE IN AREA" TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES".. EC NINE ME DIRECTORS REPORTEDLY FURTHER AGREED THAT WHILE EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO SC RES 242 WAS NOT ATTAINABLE, NOTHING COULD BE SUPPORTED WHICH IN ANY WAY REJECTED 242. ALMOST ALL DISCUSSION OF MODERATING LANGUAGE HAS BEEN IN CONTEXT OF INSERTING 242 - TYPE PHRASEOLOGY; SO FAR AS WE KNOW, EUROPEANS HAVE NO INTENTION OF ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE PLO DECISION TO REPUDIATE TERRORISM IN RETURN FOR NINE'S ACQUIESCENCE IN A RESOLUTION, COMMENT: NINE SEEM DETERMINED TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO AVOID SPLIT WHICH OCCURRED IN PLO INVITATION VOTE. ON CERTAIN ISSUES, HOWEVER, SUCH AS WHETHER PLO IS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS, THERE ARE REAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT, IN NEW YORK AT LEAST, PRESSURES FOR SOLIDARITY ARE LIKELY TO MOVE NINE MORE TOWARD FRENCH THAN BRITISH POSITION.

4. ATTITUDES AND OBJECTIVES OF ARAB DELEGATIONS

NOT A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATE WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN PROFESSES TO BELIEVE PLO WILL PRESS FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN "MODERATE" RESOLUTION. WHAT "MODERATE " MEANS OF COURSE VARIES FROM ONE ARAB REP TO ANOTHER. NEVERTHELESS, COMMON THREAD IS THAT PLO WILL NOT PRESS FOR SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC PALESTINIAN STATE, BUT WILL ACCEPT A CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONAL ENTITY AND AT LEAST IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AS SOVEREIGN STATE. EGYPTIANS, LEBANESE AND SYRIANS IN PARTICULAR SEEM COMMITTED TO ATTEMPTING PERSUADE PLO THAT ITS INTERESTS LIE IN RESOLUTION THAT IS ADOPTED BY OVERWHELMING MAJORITY, INCLUDING EUROPEANS. ON SUCH A RESOLUTION, ARABS THINK OF USG AS AT LEAST ABSTAINING. IN SUM, ARAB DELEGATIONS EXPECT A RESOLUTION THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT PALESTINIAN POLITICAL INTERESTS, BUT WHICH IS BROADLY ACCEPTABLE AND ENHANCES PLO IMAGE AS RESPONSIBLE NEGOTIATING PARTNER.

5. ISRAELI ATTITUDES AND OBJECTIVES

ISRAELI MISSION SEES DEBATE LARGELY IN TERMS OF HOW MUCH OPPOSITION IT CAN MUSTER TO A RESOLUTION WHICH IS BOUND TO BE UNACCEPTABLE. FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, EUROPEAN EFFORTS TO

ACHIEVE MODERATE RESOLUTION ARE SUSPECT. ISRAELIS HERE HAVE ALREADY STRONGLY INTIMATED THAT THEY EXPECT MORE US HELP IN CAPITALS THAN WAS GIVEN ON PLO INVITATION RESOLUTION. DESPITE THEIR GLOOM, ISRAELI DELEGATES DO NOT APPEAR TO CONSIDER OUTCOME OF DEBATE AS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO AFFECT ISRAEL'S INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS.

6. PLO OBJECTIVES

IN EARLY NOV. 12 CALL ON PLO DELEGATE NABIL SHAATH (STATED PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT MISSION CONTACT ON BEHALF OF HOST COUNTRY) SHAATH BRIEFLY OUTLINED PLO OBJECTIVES IN GA DEBATE. PRIMARY PLO GOAL, HE SAIDN, WAS TO LAY GROUND WORK FOR PALESTINE SETTLEMENT BY ADOPTION OF UN RESOLUTION WHICH CLEARLY DEFINED POLITICAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THIS RESOLUTION WAS ALREADY DRAFTED (BY PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HE IMPLIED) AND WOULD BE PRESENTED LATE NOVEMBER 12 TO ARAB GROUP HERE. RESOLUTION WOULD FOLLOW LINES OF RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTION. IT WOULD AFFIRM RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE A) TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND, B) TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL AUTHORITY ON TERRITORY FROM WHICH ISRAEL WITHDREW, AND C) TO USE ALL MEANS WITHIN UN CHARTER TO ACHIEVE THEIR RIGHTS. SHAATH SAID PLO ALSO WANTED AN "EXECUTIVE ACTION" PARAGRAPH WHICH WOULD ASSIGN CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS TO SYG OR SC, AND CALL FOR PERIODIC REPORTS. HE SAID PLO WAS UNCERTAIN HOW TO HANDLE THIS, AND PLANNED DISCUSS IT WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ARAB GROUP. FINALLY, SHAATH REMARKED THAT ARAFAT, IN CLOSING PARAGRAPH OF HIS NOV. 13 SPEECH, WOULD DEFINE ELEMENTS WHICH PLO HOPED TO SEE IN GA RESOLUTION. THERE WOULD NOT, HE SAID, BE ANY "BOMBSHELLS" IN ARAFAT'S SPEECH. SCALI

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